



Convention on Biological Diversity

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**Conference of the Parties
to the Convention on
Biological Diversity**
Sixteenth meeting

**Conference of the Parties
to the Convention on
Biological Diversity serving
as the meeting of the Parties
to the Cartagena Protocol
on Biosafety**
Eleventh meeting

**Conference of the Parties to the
Convention on Biological Diversity
serving as the meeting of the Parties to
the Nagoya Protocol on Access to
Genetic Resources and the Fair and
Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising
from their Utilization**
Fifth meeting

Cali, Colombia, 21 October–1 November 2024
Item 2 of the provisional agenda*
Organizational matters

Procedures for elections to fill the positions of vice-presidents of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and chairs of the intergovernmental subsidiary bodies

Note by the Secretariat

I Background

1. Rule 21 of the rules of procedure for meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity provides that 10 vice-presidents, one of whom acts as Rapporteur, are to be elected from among the representatives of the Parties present at the meeting. At its fifteenth meeting, the Conference of the Parties elected 10 vice-presidents for a term of office commencing upon the closure of the fifteenth meeting and ending at the closure of the sixteenth meeting.¹ At its sixteenth meeting, the Conference of the Parties is expected to elect new vice-presidents (Bureau members),² two from each of the five regional groups,³ one of whom acts as Rapporteur. The term of office of the new vice-presidents will commence upon the closure of the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and end at the closure of its seventeenth meeting.
2. Rule 26 of the rules of procedure provides that the chair of any subsidiary body is elected by the Conference of the Parties. At its fifteenth meeting, the Conference of the Parties elected Senka

* CBD/COP/16/1.

¹ In addition to the President, the current Bureau for the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties comprises the following members: Khangeziwe Mabuza (Eswatini), Abderahmane Zino Izourar (Algeria), Krishneel Nand (Fiji), Somaly Chan (Cambodia), Teona Karchava (Georgia), Angela Lozan (Republic of Moldova), Gillian Guthrie (Jamaica), María Teresa Becerra Ramírez (Colombia), Eric Schauls (Luxembourg) and Norbert Bärlocher (Switzerland).

² The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization will elect substitutes, as necessary, for any officers from Parties to the Convention that are not Parties to one or the other Protocol.

³ The African States, Asia-Pacific States, Eastern European States, Latin American and Caribbean States and Western European and other States.

Barudanović (Bosnia and Herzegovina) as Chair of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and Chirra Achalender Reddy (India) as Chair of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, for a term of office commencing at the closure of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and ending at the closure of the sixteenth meeting.

3. Consequently, the Conference of the Parties will be expected to elect at its sixteenth meeting new chairs of the two subsidiary bodies to preside over the respective bodies for a term of office commencing at the closure of the present meeting and ending at the closure of the seventeenth meeting. According to the established regional rotation, it is expected that the Chair of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice will be elected from the African States and that the Chair of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation will be elected from the Latin American and Caribbean States.

4. Should the Conference of the Parties agree under agenda item 14, on implementation of Article 8(j) and related provisions, to establish a subsidiary body on Article 8(j) and other provisions of the Convention, it may decide that the body should have two co-chairs: one nominated by the region whose turn it is to chair, and the other nominated by representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities. The chairing of subsidiary bodies rotates among the five regions,⁴ and with a view to avoiding having more than one chair from any region at the same time, the Conference of the Parties may therefore wish to elect a co-chair from the Western European and other States and a co-chair from indigenous peoples and local communities. The draft text of the modus operandi for the proposed subsidiary body provides that at least one of the co-chairs would be from a developing country. If the Party-nominated co-chair is from the Western European and other States, then the indigenous peoples and local communities should nominate a co-chair from a developing country (assuming that the draft modus operandi is adopted as submitted).

5. Consistent with rule 18 of the rules of procedure, participation in the meetings, including in elections, requires the submission of credentials signed or issued either by the Head of State or Government or by the minister for foreign affairs or, in the case of a regional economic integration organization, by the competent authority of that organization.⁵

II Election procedure

6. Once finalized, any election constitutes a decision. Pursuant to rule 30 of the rules of procedure, the presence at a meeting session of at least two thirds of the Parties to the Convention is required for the Conference of the Parties to adopt any decision at that session. The Convention having 196 Parties, at least 131 Parties need to be physically represented at a session to constitute a decision-taking quorum and proceed with the conduct of the elections.

7. The election of officers, including the aforementioned vice-presidents of the Conference of the Parties and chairs of the subsidiary bodies, is normally done by acclamation. The following subsections, however, provide information on the procedures for voting in case election by acclamation for one or more officers is not possible.

1. Rules applicable to the election of vice-presidents

8. As indicated in paragraph 1 above, rule 21 of the rules of procedure provides that 10 vice-presidents, one of whom acts as Rapporteur, are to be elected from among the representatives of the Parties present at the meeting.

⁴ The sequence of regional rotation for subsidiary bodies is as follows: African States, Western European and other States, Asia-Pacific States, Latin America and Caribbean States and Eastern European States.

⁵ Notification No. 2024-038 contains further details on credentials, including a link to a sample format of appropriate credentials. Reminders on submission of credentials are contained in notifications No. 2024-083 and No 2024-102 .

9. In accordance with established practice, the Conference of the Parties may wish to decide to elect, by acclamation, the candidates from the regions for which there are agreed candidates and the number of candidates corresponds to the number of positions to be filled.

10. Where there is no consensus on the nominees, such as when an objection has been made to the candidate or candidates or a when a Party nominates one or more additional candidates and calls for an election by secret ballot, the Conference of the Parties must elect the officers by secret ballot, in accordance with rules 49 to 51 of the rules of procedure, which read:

Rule 49

All elections shall be held by secret ballot, unless otherwise decided by the Conference of the Parties.

Rule 50

1. If, when one person or one delegation is to be elected, no candidate obtains in the first ballot a majority of the votes cast by the Parties present and voting, a second ballot restricted to the two candidates obtaining the largest number of votes shall be taken. If in the second ballot the votes are equally divided, the President shall decide between the candidates by drawing lots.

2. In the case of a tie in the first ballot among three or more candidates obtaining the largest number of votes, a second ballot shall be held. If a tie results among more than two candidates, the number shall be reduced to two by lot and the balloting, restricted to them, shall continue in accordance with the procedure set forth in paragraph 1 of this rule.

Rule 51

1. When two or more elective places are to be filled at one time under the same conditions, those candidates, not exceeding the number of such places, obtaining in the first ballot the largest number of votes and a majority of the votes cast by the Parties present and voting shall be deemed elected.

2. If the number of candidates obtaining such majority is less than the number of persons or delegations to be elected, there shall be additional ballots to fill the remaining places, the voting being restricted to the candidates obtaining the greatest number of votes in the previous ballot, to a number not more than twice the places remaining to be filled, provided that, after the third inconclusive ballot, votes may be cast for any eligible person or delegation.

3. If three such unrestricted ballots are inconclusive, the next three ballots shall be restricted to the candidates who obtained the greatest number of votes in the third of the unrestricted ballots, to a number not more than twice the places remaining to be filled, and the following three ballots thereafter shall be unrestricted, and so on until all the places have been filled.

2. Balloting procedure for the election of the vice-presidents

11. As the meetings are held in person, there is no online balloting.

12. Upon commencement of balloting, the conference officers will first distribute the ballot papers to the delegations with representatives with valid credentials sitting behind their nameplates. Each such delegation will be invited to vote for two candidates from each region. The ballot paper will indicate the names of the candidates.

13. In accordance with rule 48 of the rules of procedure, once the President has announced the beginning of voting, no representative may interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting.

14. Representatives have the options to:

(a) Mark the boxes for two candidates from each region with a tick [✓] or a cross [X] to indicate support for the candidates;

(b) Mark the box for one of the candidates with a tick or cross to indicate support for that candidate; or

(c) Leave the ballot blank.

15. The President will propose three representatives from three Parties to serve as tellers, whose role will be to monitor the election and certify the results. The Secretariat will assist in identifying the tellers from the representatives of Parties to the Convention participating in the meeting. The tellers may not be from the same regions as the candidates.

16. A ballot paper will be considered invalid if a representative marks more than two boxes. If a mistake is made in the process of marking the boxes, the delegation in question should immediately request a new ballot paper from the conference officers.

17. If a ballot paper contains any notations other than a mark or a tick in the box for a candidate of any region, those notations will be disregarded.

18. After the ballot papers are collected and the President has announced that the balloting has been closed, the session will be suspended to allow time for the counting of ballots.

19. The tellers, with assistance from the Secretariat, will count the ballots, certify the results and submit them to the President.

20. The President will resume the session, announce the results and declare elected the candidates who have received the largest number of votes and a simple majority of the Parties present and voting,⁶ in accordance with rule 51 of the rules of procedure.

21. Pursuant to paragraph 2 of rule 51, if the number of candidates obtaining the required majority of the Parties present and voting is less than the number of persons to be elected, additional ballots will be held to fill the remaining places. Balloting will be restricted to the candidates obtaining the greatest number of votes in the previous ballot.

22. Once the elections of the vice-presidents have been completed, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meetings of the Parties to the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols, respectively, will be invited to elect under their respective relevant agenda items a substitute for any elected Bureau member who is from a country that is not a Party to that Protocol.

3. Rules applicable to the election of the chairs of the subsidiary bodies

23. Rule 26, paragraph 3, of the rules of procedure provides that, unless otherwise decided by the Conference of the Parties, the chair for each subsidiary body is to be elected by the Conference of the Parties.

24. Accordingly, the Chair of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice is elected by the Conference of the Parties, as provided in the consolidated *modus operandi* of the Subsidiary Body contained in decision VIII/10, annex III, paragraph 10.

⁶ Pursuant to rule 40, paragraph 5, of the rules of procedure, the phrase “Parties present and voting” means Parties present at the session at which voting takes place and casting their vote. Parties abstaining from voting are considered as not voting.

25. Similarly, the Chair of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation is elected by the Conference of the Parties in accordance with the consolidated *modus operandi* of the Subsidiary Body contained in decision XIII/25, annex, section C, paragraph 2.

26. The chairs of the two subsidiary bodies rotate among regions. As indicated in paragraph 3 above, it is therefore expected that the Chair of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice will be elected from the African States and that the Chair of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation will be elected from the Latin American and Caribbean States. Where there is consensus on the candidates, the Conference of the Parties may elect by acclamation the candidates for the respective chair positions. In the absence of consensus, the Conference of the Parties must proceed to election by secret ballot, in accordance with rules 49 and 50 of the rules of procedure.

4. Balloting procedure for the election of the chairs of the subsidiary bodies

27. Upon commencement of balloting, the conference officers will first distribute the ballot paper to the delegations with representatives with valid credentials sitting behind their nameplates. Each such delegation will be invited to vote for one candidate for each election.

28. According to rule 48 of the rules of procedure, once the President has announced the beginning of voting, no representative may interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting.

29. The ballot papers will indicate the name of the candidate for each of the chairs to be elected.

30. For each election, representatives have the options to:

(a) Mark the box for one of the candidates with a tick or a cross to indicate support for that candidate; or

(b) Leave the ballot blank.

31. The ballot paper will be considered invalid if representatives mark more than one box.

32. The balloting procedure specified in paragraphs 15 to 21 above applies *mutatis mutandis*.
